

Message Text

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INFO USMISSION GENEVA

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AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 32990

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, SNAR, TH, LA, BM

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH DR. J. G. DE BEUS, EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR OF UN FUND FOR DRUG ABUSE CONTROL (UNFDAC)

SUMMARY: DR. J. G. DE BEUS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UN
FUND FOR DRUG ABUSE CONTROL (UNFDAC), CALLED ON THE
AMBASSADOR DEC 3. TOPICS OF DISCUSSION INCLUDED THE NEXT
STEP AFTER COMPLETION OF THE PRESENT UN CROP SUBSTITUTION
RESEARCH PROJECT AND THE PROSPECTS FOR NARCOTICS CONTROL
IN LAOS. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT LAOTIAN NARCOTICS PRO-
DUCTION SEEMS TO BE IN ROUGH BALANCE WITH LOCAL CONSUMPTION.
THE BULK OF GOLDEN TRIANGLE OPIUM IS PRODUCED IN BURMA.
END SUMMARY.

1. DR. J.G. DE BUES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UN FUND
FOR DRUG ABUSE CONTROL (UNFDAC), CALLED ON AMBASSADOR
DEC 3 FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION OF NARCOTICS SITUATION IN
THAILAND AND POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS FOR UN AND OTHER
ACTIVITY IN THIS FIELD. DR. DE BEUS WAS ACCOMPANIED BY
MRS. WALDHEIM-NATURAL OF UNFDAC GENEVA OFFICE (WHO HAS
SPENT THE PAST MONTH OR SO VISITNG THAILAND AND LAOS);
KHUN CHIT POSAYANONDA, ADVISER TO THE UN PROGRAM FOR
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DRUG ABUSE CONTROL IN THAILAND AND COL. CHAWALIT YOTMANI,

OF THE THAI POLICE NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION CENTER.

2. DR. DE BEUS BEGAN BY NOTING THAT THE UNPDAC IN THAILAND HAD DONE A USEFUL JOB IN THE FIELD OF IDENTIFYING AND TESTING POTENTIAL SUBSTITUTE CROPS FOR OPIUM. THIS UN PROJECT HAS ONE MORE YEAR TO GO. NEXT PROBLEM IS TO EXTEND TO THE PEOPLE THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH AND TO FINANCE AND MARKET THE CROPS THAT SUBSTITUTE FOR OPIUM POPPIES. AMBASSADOR AGREED THAT THE CENTRAL PROBLEM NOW IS MARKETING. MRS. WALDHEIM-NATURAL NOTED THAT A UN MARKETING ADVISORY (MR. BOUSTEAD) IS COMING OUT SOON TO BANGKOK AND THAT THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTER HAD PROMISED TO PROVIDE TWO OTHER EXPERTS TO SPEND A TOTAL OF A YEAR IN THAILAND TO ASSIST IN MARKETING. THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT MR. BOUSTEAD HAD BEEN EXPECTED FOR MOST OF A YEAR BUT HAD NOT YET ARRIVED. HE EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT WHAT WAS NEEDED WAS NOT SO MUCH ANOTHER BUREAUCRAT BUT RATHER SOMEONE FROM PRIVATE BUSINESS WHO REALLY KNEW THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF MARKETING.

3. THERE WAS EXTENDED BUT INCONCLUSINVE DISCUSSION ABOUT THE MERITS OF ESTABLISHING A REVOLVING FUND TO SUPPORT THE MARKETING OF THE SUBSTITUTE CROPS IN THAILAND. THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE HELD THE VIEW THAT THIS FUND SHOULD BE A KINK OF "SAFETY NET" TO ENSURE THAT THE GROWERS OF SUBSTITUTE CROPS SHOULD NOT RPT NOT SUFFER FINANCIALLY IF SOMETHING HAPPENS TO THE CROP. SUCH A "SAFETY NET" WOULD SUPPLEMENT BUT NOT SUBSTITUTE FOR A MAKETING ARRANGEMENT TO SPAN THE PRESENT GAP BETWEEN THE HILL TRIBESMEN WHO GROW SUBSTITUTE CROPS AND THE POTENTIAL MARKET. MRS. WALDHEIM-NATURAL SAID SHE HAD BEEN THINKING IN TERMS OF A REVOLVING FUND OF SOME SIZE, ALTHOUGH SHE DID NOT RPT NOT MENTION ANY PARTICULAR FIGURE. SHE SAID IT SHOULD BE LARGER THAN US DOLS 100,000.

4. DR. DEBEUS SAID THAT THE UNFDAC COULD NOT PROVIDE SUCH A REVOLVING FUND, THOUGH HE SAID THERE MUST BE SOME SUITABLE SOURCE OF A MODERATE FUND OF THIS KIND. THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE WAS CLEAR IN HIS OWN MIND THAT THE U.S. COULD NOT RPT NOT PROVIDE SUCH A FUND. WE HAD CONFIDENTIAL

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EXPLORED THIS POSSIBILITY AND HAD BEEN DIFINITELY TURNED DOWN. THE AMBASSADOR CONTINUED THAT, REALISTICALLY, IT SHOULD BE THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT THAT WOULD PROVIDE THE FUNDS. AFTER ALL, THE MARKETING ORGANIZATION PRIMARILY SHOULD INVOLVE THAI FARMERS SELLING THEIR PRODUCE TO A THAI MARKETING ORGANIZATION, AND IT IS BEST TO KEEP FOREIGNERS OUT OF THE PICTURE. THE AMOUNT INVOLVED IN ANY CASE IS SMALL. COL. CHAWALIT COMMENTED

THAT THE RTG HAD PROVIDED 700,000 BAHT (US DOLS 35,000) TO BUY SEEDS FOR THE HILL TRIBE PROJECTS AND SIMPLY WANTS TO GET THE QUANTITY OF SEEDS BACK WHICH IT HAD BOUGHT WITH THESE FUNDS, SO THAT THE PROJECTS COULD CONTINUE. HE THOUGHT THAT THE RTG COULD PROVIDE UP TO 1.0 MILLION BAHT (US DOLS 50,000) FOR A REVOLVING FUND.

5. DR. BEUS ASKED THE AMBASSADOR ABOUT HIS VIEWS ON A PROPOSED UN PROJECT IN LAOS, DR. DE BEUS NOTED THAT THE LPDR GOVERNEMENT HAD DECIDED TO ERADICATE THE CULTIVATION OF THE OPIUM POPPY IN FIVE YEARS, BUT HE ADDED THAT THE LAO DO NOT RPT NO SEEM TO HAVE THE PEOPLE AVAILABLE TO CARRY OUT SUCH A PROGRAM. THE AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE UTILITY OF A UN NARCOTICS PROGRAM IN LAOS. IT REALLY IS A QUESTION OF WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO DO. IF IT IS A MATTER OF A POLITICAL DECISION TO ENCOURAGE LAOS TO BE PART OF THE WORLD, A CASE CAN BE MADE FOR A UN PROJECT.

6. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT LAOTIAN PRODUCTION APPEARS TO BE MORE OR LESS EQUAL WITH LOCAL CONSUMPTION AND FROM THE U.S. POINT OF VIEW, IF SOME LAO SMOKE SPIUM AS A PAINKILLER OR SUBSTITUTE FOR WESTERN MEDICINES, THAT PRESENTS NO DANGER TO THAI, AMERICANS OR WESTERN EUROPEANS. THE ONLY AREA IN LAOS WHERE THERE IS ANY DANGER OF PRODUCTION FOR EXPORT TO THAILAND IS IN THE BAN HOUET SAID AREA. THE U.S. FORMERLY SUPPORTED A CROP SUBSTITUTION PROJECT THERE HOWEVER, THE COMMUNISTS DESTROYED THE PROJECT COMPLETELY WHEN THEY TOOK OVER. MRS. WALDHEIM-NATURAL COMMENTED THAT THEY HAD DONE SO BECAUSE IT WAS AN AMERICAN PROJECT. THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE HAD DIFFICULTY BELIEVING THAT THE LPDR REALLY WANTS TO ERADICATE OPIUM POPPY CULTIVATION IF THEY BEHAVE IN THIS WAY.
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7. THE AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE PROPOSAL TO SUPPORT A LAO DE-TOXIFICATION AND RE-EDUCATION PROJECT CENTERED ON ISLANDS IN NAM NGUM RESERVOIR. SOME OF THE INMATES MAY BE NARCOTICS ADDICTS, BUT MOST OF THEM ARE THERE FOR HAVING "BAD THOUGHTS". IN FACT, THEY ARE POLITICAL PRISONERS. HE THOUGHT THE UN WOULD BE WELL-ADVISED TO STEER CLEAR OF THE NAM NGUM AREA. MRS. WALDHEIM-NATURAL SAID SHE HAD VISITED SEVERAL OF THE ISLANDS, AND SHE WAS SATISFIED THAT THE ISLANDS SHE VISITED REALLY HAD ADDICTS IN THE COURSE OF TREATMENT. HOWEVER, SHE ADMITTED HAVING SEEN BARRACKS ON A LARGER ISLAND WHICH SHE DID NOT VISIT. SHE ASKED WHAT WAS THERE. HER LAO HOSTS, AFTER SOME EMBARRASSMENT, REPLIED THAT THAT WAS A "PSYCHIATRIC CENTER."

8. DR. DE BEUS ASKED WHAT THE PRODUCTION OF OPIUM WAS IN LAOS. THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE ESTIMATED IT AT ABOUT 40 TONS ANNUALLY. DR. DE BEUS SAID HE THOUGHT IT WAS HIGHER AND ADDED HE HAD BEEN TOLD THAT THE PRODUCTION WAS BETWEEN 100 AND 150 TONS ANNUALLY. THE AMBASSADOR REPLIED HE FELT THIS FIGURE WAS TOO HIGH. WHERE WOULD IT BE GROWN? LAOS IS A LARGE COUNTRY, GENERALLY EMPTY OF PEOPLE. IF THE COMMUNISTS ARE REALLY OPPOSED TO OPIUM POPPIES IN POPULATED AREAS SUCH AS SAM NEUA AND THE PLAINE DES JARRES, FOR EXAMPLE, WHERE THE COMMUNISTS HAVE BEEN IN CONTROL FOR 20 YEARS AND MORE. THE AMBASSADOR SUGGESTED THAT, IF THERE IS ANY OPIUM COMING INTO THAILAND FROM LAOS, IT MIGHT VERY WELL BE OPIUM PRODUCED IN BURMA WHICH HAS BEEN MOVED FROM BURMA THROUGH LAOS TO THAILAND TO AVOID THE RELATIVELY STRICTER CONTROLS EXERCISED ON THE THAI-BURMESE BORDER.

9. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT BY FAR THE LARGEST AMOUNT OF OPIUM PRODUCED IN THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE AREA COMES FROM BURMA. HOWEVER HE ADMITTED THAT THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF THE THAI AND THE U.S. HAVE INTERRUPTED THE TRAFFIC ONLY TO A SMALL EXTENT. HE FELT THAT THE THAI PERFORMANCE HAD IMPROVED CONSIDERABLY OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS OR SO.

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